

Birth

Paṭhama Janeti Sutta (S.N)

Buddhism always gives us understanding to see the world. That knowledge blossoms our wisdom which guides us to get rid of suffering. If we can learn what the Buddha taught and realize it in our life we are able to achieve real happiness.

Our success or happiness depends on how far we have purified our mind from negative thoughts like craving, anger and delusion. Decreasing craving and anger depends on decreasing delusion. Reducing of delusion depends on realizing of the four noble truths. Finally, our complete spiritual development depends on practicing mindfulness and mindful meditation. Mindfulness means awareness of our body and mind. Mindful meditation is making our mind always to reflect on impermanence of body and mind. Ultimately, we have to practice only reflecting on impermanence of the present thought which consists with five group of existence. They, which can't be separated, are form, feelings, perception, consciousness, mental formations. These five phenomena always arise and cease. The Buddha kindly advised his disciples who are in all spiritual steps to reflect on above five aggregates to overcome suffering completely. Reflecting on impermanence of five aggregates is the way to get rid of delusion. When delusion ceases, craving and anger automatically cease.

According to this discourse, *Paṭhama Janeti Sutta*, one day, at a night, a deity came to the Buddha and asked some questions saying a stanza.

*Kiṃsu janeti purisaṃ,
kiṃsu tassa vidhāvati;
Kiṃsu saṃsāramāpādi,
kiṃsu tassa mahabbhayan”ti.*

What gives birth to a person?
What do they have that runs about?
What enters transmigration (saṃsara)?
What’s their greatest fear?”

Answering for those questions the Buddha said a stanza.

*Taṇhā janeti purisaṃ,
cittamassa vidhāvati;
Satto saṃsāramāpādi,
dukkhamassa mahabbhayan”ti.*

Craving gives birth to a person.
Their mind is what runs about.
A sentient being enters transmigration (samsara).
Suffering is their greatest fear.

In this discourse, the Buddha explains several things like craving, mind, the sentient being, Samsara and suffering. These topics are very important to realize the world and ourselves.

Craving:

Craving or the attachment to the world is the nearest reason which causes to be reborn. The Buddha realized when he attained enlightenment that craving is the nearest which sentient beings have been going from birth to birth for a long time in the *Sansāric* journey. According to the common sense, craving is the desire to gratify six internal senses (spheres) like eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, and six external objects as well like forms, sounds, smell, tastes, bodily impressions and mental objects. The noble truth of the cause of suffering is not just craving that relates to the external objects but the attachment to one's own self. The real cause of suffering is the passionate attachment to self. Detachment as well as attachment arises because of one's own desire. When someone is attached to his own self, he likes what brings his happiness and he dislikes what brings suffering. If someone can get rid of attachment to his own self, then automatically attachment and detachment to external persons and things cease. For this deliverance, Buddhism proclaims a path which consists with the right understanding.

Mind

Mind is the main thing of a living being. Sentient being roams in the *Sansāric* circle with his mind which is impermanence. That is why the Buddha says mind is forerunner of all evil and good states. Mind is chief. Mind-made are they. If someone speaks or acts with an impure mind, because of that, suffering follows him, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox. On the other side, if someone speaks or acts with a pure mind, because of that, happiness follows him, even as one's shadow that never leaves.

Though mind plays a main role in our life, and mind decides many things in our life, mind is impermanent. Mind always arises with the conditions when conditions cease mind also ceases at the moment without anything remaining. Mind didn't come to the present from the past, and it will not go to the future from the present. However, the past thought influenced the present thought, also, present thought will influence the future thought. Mind arises and ceases as the theory of the dependent origination.

Although mind influences a lot to our entire life, mind doesn't act alone. Mind is combined with other for aggregates like form, feelings, perception and mental formations. These five things are not separable. These five things arise together and cease together with the conditions. Actually, our entire life is the present thought. If we are able to succeed the present thought, we can succeed our entire life. The Buddha asked everyone kindly to develop mind. The way to cultivate our mind is that adding mindfulness to the mind. That means living in the present moment with awareness of body and mind. Buddhism says not only mindfulness which is living in the present moment but reflecting on impermanence which is mindful meditation. If someone needs to get rid of suffering and achieve real happiness, he should concentrate his mind using a particular wholesome object such as loving kindness, breathing. This is the real protection and refuge to the mind. When

someone concentrates mind, his mind is not fixed in external persons and things. It means he has overcome materialism. At the same time, he has overcome decay, illness and death. If someone is clever to depend on even mind reflecting on impermanence, at that moment he has overcome even his mind since he acts in wisdom. Then he has overcome even rebirth. He has completely liberated from the Samsāric Journey.

Sentient being

Next the deity asks; What enters transmigration (Samsāra)? Then the Buddha answers; sentient being enters transmigration (samsara). According to Karmic law which depends on delusion, sentient being roams in the Samsara. Though the Buddha says like that in this situation, the especial thing that we should realize here is, there is no permanent being except the five aggregates. Five aggregates are; matter (*Rupa* - රූප), feelings (*Vedanā* - වේදනා), perception (*Sañña* - සංකල්ප), mental formations (*Samkhāra* - සංකාර) and consciousness (*Viññāna* - විඤ්ඤාණ).

According the Vajira Sutta,

*Yathā hi aṅgasambhārā,
hoti saddo ratho iti;
Evaṃ khandhesu santesu,
hoti sattoti sammuti.*

When the parts are assembled

we use the word ‘chariot’ (or vehicle).

So too, when the aggregates are present

‘sentient being’ is the convention we use. (Bhikkuni Samyutta, S.N.)

Transmigration (Samsāra)

Samsara is the place where sentient being roams from birth to birth. Samsara depends on delusion or ignorance of sentient being. What delusion is that; when someone experiences something through his spheres, if he thinks that there is a world in outside, that's delusion. Further he may think that before he experienced something, there was a world, also, after experience, the world remains. This is delusion.

Suffering

Suffering or dissatisfaction is one of the main teachings in Buddhism. Getting rid of suffering completely depends on understanding the noble truth of suffering. Understanding the noble truth of suffering leads to understand the four-noble truths. Understanding the four noble truth helps to overcome suffering.

In the Dhammacakka Sutta, the Buddha explains all kinds of sufferings that being face in their day to day life. Birth (ජාතිපි දුක්ඛං), aging (ජරාපි දුක්ඛං), sickness (ව්‍යාධිපි දුක්ඛං), death (මරණමිපි දුක්ඛං), union with what is displeasing (අප්පියෙති සම්පයෝගෝ දුක්ඛෝ), separation from what is pleasing (පියෙති විප්පයෝගෝ දුක්ඛෝ) and not getting what one wants are sufferings

(යම්පිච්ඡං න ලෙහති තම්පි දුක්ඛං). These are the negative things that we dislike in our life. When they come to our life, we suffer, worry, upset, lament or get angry. All of these sufferings depend on ignorance of five aggregates. Finally, it is said as "In brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering" (සංඛිත්තේන පඤ්චුපාදනක්ඛන්ධා දුක්ඛං). First seven things are not difficult to understand as suffering. Anybody, who is wise, can understand that they are suffering. The especial reason of suffering, that is never understood without a Buddha's advice, is the five aggregates.

Five aggregates are;

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| i. Matter | (<i>Rupa</i> - රූප) |
| ii. Feelings | (<i>Vedanā</i> - වේදනා) |
| iii. Perception | (<i>Sañña</i> - සංකල්ප) |
| iv. Mental formations | (<i>Samkhāra</i> - සංඛාර) |
| v. Consciousness | (<i>Viññāna</i> - විඤ්ඤාණ) |

When we experience through our senses about the world, these five aggregates arise together. They can't be separated. As the result of arising of these five things, we have an experience. These five aggregates suddenly arise and also cease instantly. When we experience something, they have not only arisen but ceased also. When we experience something through our eyes, ears, nose, tongue or body, these five senses can't get pleasure or pain. Those experiences cease instantly, we get pleasure or pain in the sense of mind as a past experience. However, we think that we experience in the present because of ignorance. Then we find things and beings in the external world. That is why we suffer. Meeting things and beings outside is the nature of the noble truth of suffering. If we can wisely understand that these five aggregates arise and cease at the moment with the conditions, we are able to understand its impermanence. Then we don't find any external things and beings. There aren't any external beings or things. We create them according to our present mental condition with ignorance. As soon as we experience something through our senses, if we are mindful and wise to reflect on it as it is, we always look inside. Then we have nothing to desire or hate. It means we are on the path of cessation of suffering. As much as we have this understanding we have liberated from dissatisfaction and suffering.



May the Triple Gem Bless you!

තෙරුවන් සරණයි!

May all beings be well happy and peaceful!

(සියලු සත්ත්වයෝ සුවපත් වෙත්වා!)

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